Syracuse University Project Advance at a Glance

Key Points

- **PA is a concurrent enrollment course offered to BHS students via Syracuse University in upstate New York.**
- **PA students pay tuition to Syracuse University and earn six hours of college credit**. The 2025-2026 price for those six credits was approximately **$690**. They simultaneously earn **one grade-weighted credit** for 12th grade Honors English at BHS. **Tuition assistance is available** for those who qualify.
- **Acceptance of the credits varies**. Most Michigan universities (University of Michigan being the exception) will accept the credit. For UofM, credit transfer sometimes happens after simply forwarding your Syracuse transcript. It sometimes involves an appointment with the university official who decides on transfer credits. It has sometimes involved having a transcript sent directly from Syracuse after completing your freshman year and counting the credits toward the university's general elective requirements. Another option is taking the AP Language exam; both courses offer intensive analysis of nonfiction and persuasive texts, and PA students who have taken the AP Lang exam have done well on it.
- **Classes are limited to 20 students per section**. The reduced class size makes for more robust class discussions and makes it easier for students to regularly conference with the instructor about their essays.
- Regardless of whether their credits were accepted, **the vast majority of students report that the course left them very well prepared for university-level writing and thinking**.

Course Description

First semester in a nutshell: This course will give you the time and structure to grow significantly as a writer. **In detail:** WRT 105 is a writing studio, which means a variety of workshopping techniques are incorporated in the class. Students create a multi-genre project that engages questions of style, genre, and purpose; an analysis essay exploring the cultural significance of a documentary film; and a research-based argumentative essay on a topic of their choice. In essays, students seek and engage evidence that complicates their position, resulting in essays with an evolved thesis and a comprehensive analysis of the subject. Essays are composed in several drafts, and targeted revision strategies, workshops, and opportunities to conference with the instructor all help students develop the desired degree of depth and complexity. In other words, though they are producing college-level writing, there's ample support built into the course. In addition to these larger assignments, students will work with college writing textbooks, will read scholarly articles on a variety of subjects—both for content and to analyze composition techniques—and analyze a variety of texts to discuss how they create meaning.

Second semester in a nutshell: This course will help you to become an astute reader of social class and power dynamics—both as they appear in literature and in our world today; if you're already a culturally astute reader, it will give you a framework for analysis. **In detail:** Though the "ENG" in the title of the second semester course (ENG 181: Class and Literary Texts) denotes that it is an offering in Syracuse's English department, the class is better understood as a *cultural studies* class—an interdisciplinary approach to understanding how "culture" creates and transforms everyday experiences, social relations, and structures of power. Using this approach, ENG 181 introduces students to sociological, political, and cultural theories that can better help them understand power dynamics as they relate to class, status, race, and gender. As with the first semester, ample support is provided to students as they work to make sense of these complex ideas. Armed with theory, students apply it to text in order to explore *how* they create meaning—the commonly told stories about people that the text reinforces, how it constructs an understanding of different kinds of subjects (people), what it reveals about that which is taken for granted in a culture, and how those seemingly natural assumptions exert their power. Since the goal is to use theory as a lens for textual analysis, we work with a broad range of texts—canonical literature such as stories and plays as well as films, television shows, and advertisements. During the semester, students write short response papers to practice applying these new ideas to a text, construct an annotated bibliography to solidify their understanding of key concepts, compose two larger essays that allow for a more in-depth reading of a text, and create a final project to synthesize the ideas we've worked with during the semester.

Class Expectations

- Expect to discard major portions of a rough draft or to look critically at something that at first may seem trivial.
- Be prepared to avoid easy answers in your first semester papers and to engage new and sometimes complex ideas during second semester.
- The workload is steady but purposeful. The coursework is specifically designed to meet the goals of a given essay or unit of study, and time is built into the calendar to accommodate the drafting process.
- From the class of 2024: "It's a lot of work, but it's worth it!"

BHS Advanced Placement English Options at a Glance

Key Points for AP Literature **and** AP Language:

- AP English students can receive three or four college credits by taking the AP test in May. The number of college credits depends on your test score and the institution granting that credit.
- Almost every university accepts AP test scores.
- The cost of the AP test in 2022 was $96.
- The class grade is weighted in your GPA calculation.

AP LITERATURE Course Description

In AP English Literature and Composition students will learn to understand and evaluate works of fiction and poetry from various periods and cultures. Students will read literary works and write essays to explain and support their analysis of those works. We will work on reading text closely and drawing conclusions from textual details, identifying literary and poetic techniques and their effects, developing an interpretation of a text, and presenting an interpretation and forming an argument in writing.

What do we read in A.P. Lit?

- For summer reading students read *There, There* by Tommy Orange or *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi. There is a written assignment for both books due the week school begins. Students will write an impromptu about their summer reading book upon their return in the fall.
- We read three novels/major works of literature. They include *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker, *King Lear* by William Shakespeare, and an independent reading selection from a list of pre-selected titles.
- In our short story unit we read "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Third and Final Continent" by Jhumpa Lahiri and "Sonny's Blues" by James Baldwin.
- We read and analyze poetry every Wednesday!

What do we write in A.P. Lit?

Semester 1: Summer Reading Impromptu, Literary Argument Essay, Poetry Impromptu
Semester 2: Short Story Analysis Essay, Practice Open Question Impromptu, practice impromptus for students signed up for the text

AP LANGUAGE Course Description

AP English Language and Composition is an introductory college-level composition course. Students cultivate their understanding of writing and rhetorical arguments through reading, analyzing, and writing texts as they explore topics like the rhetorical situation, claims and evidence, reasoning and organization, and style.

What do we read in A.P. Lang?

- For summer reading students read a full-length memoir and complete accompanying work
- Students read shorter nonfiction pieces in a variety of genres including both written and visual texts; many pieces draw on current events

What do we write in A.P. Lang?

- **Semester 1**: Summer Reading Impromptu, Creative Rhetorical Situations, Argumentative Essay, Rhetorical Analysis impromptu
- **Semester 2**: Argument impromptu, Synthesis impromptu, TED Talk Synthesis Project